

## **IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

A variety of small businesses currently operate within and adjacent to Hamilton's corporate limits. The commercial activity of Hamilton is presently composed of locally based small-scale retail, professional service and tourism-based businesses. (See Maps 14 & 15) The neighboring Towns of Purcellville and Leesburg provide a large portion of the area's major needs for retail and professional goods and services.

Hamilton can make use of its many assets to support economic development. The Town is a coveted residential location in Loudoun County. Natural environmental features as well as historic structures are well preserved. The community is inviting with tree-lined streets that look much the same as they did when the Town was a countryside retreat for visitors. The Town is welcoming and there is a business-friendly environment.

Economic development strategies in this Plan will reinforce and promote existing locally based businesses; expand the "community level" retail, office and restaurant uses; and promote the tourism-attracting image of the Town.

A central "core development district" within the town boundaries, focused near the center of Town, is the target area for attracting new commercial businesses and tenants. This business core area will serve as the focus of efforts to enhance and revitalize Hamilton's existing business sector. The architecture of new structures or adaptive reuse of existing structures should be compatible with the Town's historic character.

To further this vision the Town has been participating along with other western Loudoun towns in developing a comprehensive, countywide approach to economic development within the historic communities in Loudoun. This work has culminated in the formation of Main Street Loudoun (MSL); a countywide program based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center Four-Point Approach. Hamilton is currently a participating member of Main Street Loudoun and plans to address economic development issues or projects in Hamilton using the resources available through the program. A Hamilton Main Street committee has been established to work with Town Council, local community volunteers, and the MSL program to focus on economic development, historic preservation, tourism, and planning-related efforts.

Another area of economic development in the Hamilton community relates to home-based businesses as well as telecommuters. It is the intent of the Plan to promote policies that allow residents to live and work in the same community thereby decreasing commuter traffic. In addition, rural enterprises located in the Town or the Joint Land Management Area (JLMA), such as garden centers, eco-tourism (pick-your-own) and business retreats would support farming operations and help to preserve Loudoun's rural heritage.

Industrial or commercial uses of a large scale or high density will be discouraged as incompatible with the quiet residential atmosphere of the Hamilton community.



The Natural Mercantile

An important part of the economic development strategy in the Plan is recognition of the value of open space and recreational facilities in locational decisions of businesses. Land conservation is an investment that produces important economic benefits and prevents the higher costs of unplanned development. That is, planned open space, conservation areas, and recreation areas not only improve the quality of life for Town residents and make the community more attractive, but also serve to make the community more appealing for the location of new businesses. Natural areas and recreational facilities also boost the tourist appeal of Hamilton.

An economic development goal in Hamilton is to sustain the Town's fiscal health through a diverse commercial tax base while still retaining the natural, scenic residential environment. This goal recognizes the intimate connection between economic prosperity and maintenance of high quality physical and social environments.

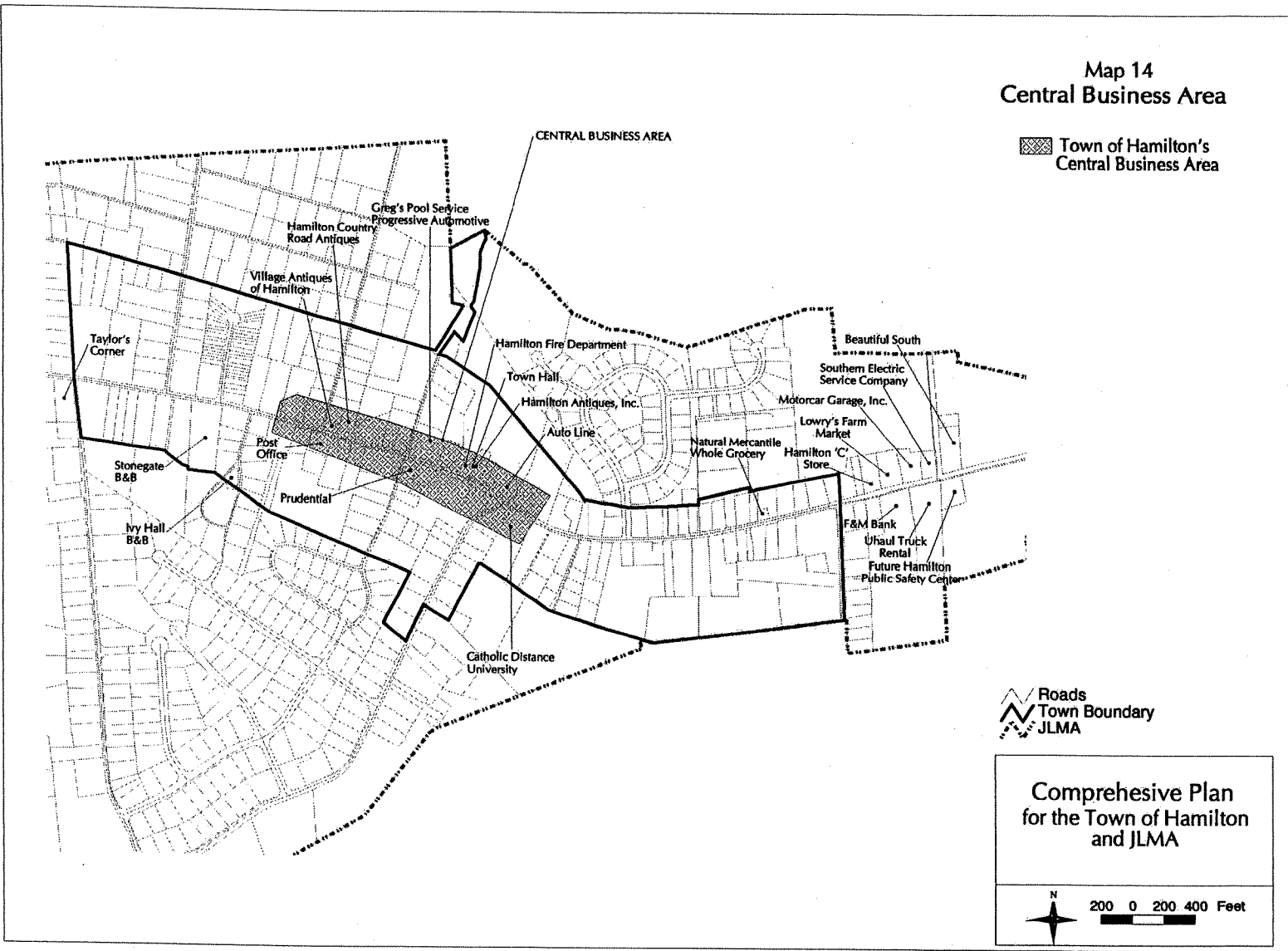
The Town may seek advice and financial assistance towards implementing a community economic development plan, which could include:

- Development and distribution of a Town business directory;
- A focus on re-development of the Town's core commercial district;
- Research to identify rural enterprises that match the Town's character; and
- Do market research, including surveys, to identify potentially successful small businesses and create strategies to attract these businesses.

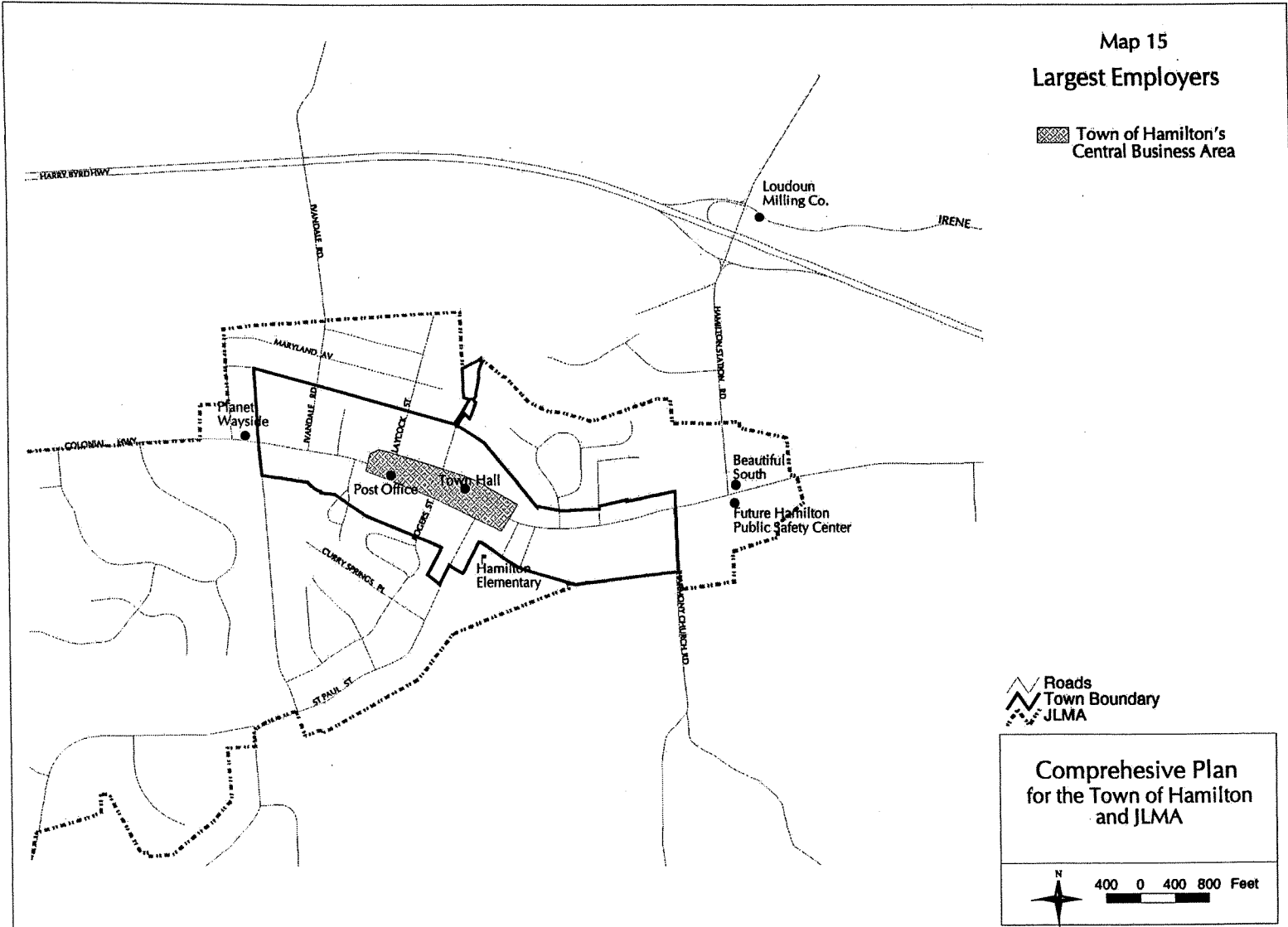
## **GOALS – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

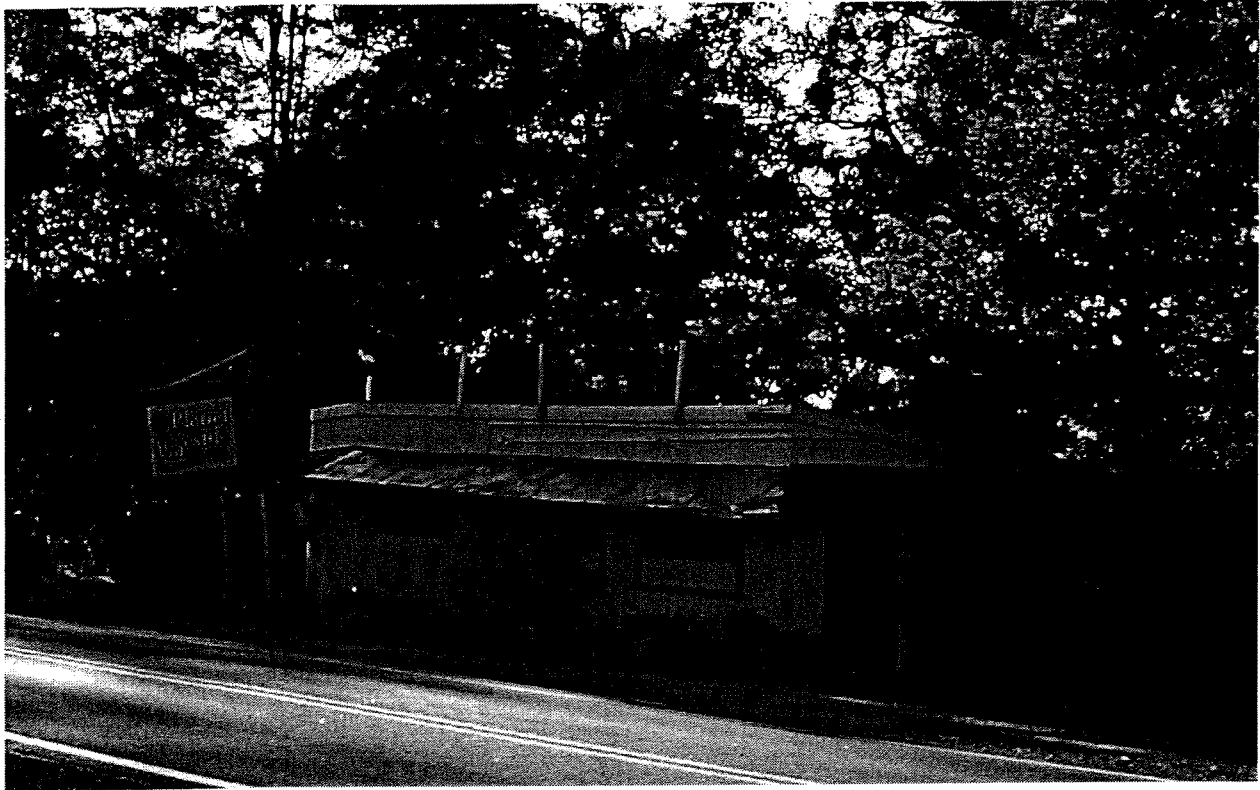
1. Create and stimulate a favorable climate for economic development within the existing commercially zoned properties in the Town and JLMA, recognizing the intimate connection between economic prosperity and maintenance of high quality physical and social environments.
2. Focus commercial development within the core commercially zoned areas within the Town. Target small-scale professional services/offices, specialty retail, lodging and tourism. Consider rural enterprises such as farm markets and garden centers within the Town's JLMA.
3. Enhance Hamilton's position as an attractive tourist destination.
4. Improve the Town's accommodation to the walking public, including improved streetscape, thorough interconnected sidewalk networks, traffic calming within the Town, welcome signs, and pedestrian and bicycle-accessible services and shopping.
5. Preserve existing agricultural lands and expand and encourage new agribusiness.
6. Improve appearance of commercial areas and properties.

Map 14  
Central Business Area



Map 15  
Largest Employers





Planet Wayside

## **POLICIES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Maintain a core commercial district within the Town boundaries focused near the center of Town. Commercial development, or re-development, will be encouraged to locate on existing commercially zoned tracts in the Town business core and in the JLMA.
2. Encourage public and commercial improvements within the core commercial district that are compatible with the Town's historic architectural character.
3. Maintain and invest in the Town's parks and open space, sidewalk system, and streetscape environment as an incentive for spurring future private sector investment in the Hamilton business community.
4. Identify and recruit new small businesses that provide employment opportunities for residents, meet the needs of Hamilton's population, or that provide goods and services to the local community or to the tourist population.
5. Promote and protect the security of existing businesses by encouraging diversity of new businesses and avoiding duplication of existing goods and services.

6. Encourage revitalization and renewal of the Town's historic central core, including preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures, development of new commercial structures compatible with the existing buildings, and inclusion of a central green space.
7. Utilize available funding and grants to improve the Colonial Highway corridor for streetscape, surfacing, and traffic calming improvements.
8. Prohibit industrial or commercial use of a large scale or high density within the Town and JLMA.
9. Develop Hamilton's tourist potential by capitalizing on the Town's rich historic heritage and historic homes and antique shops.
10. Foster a good relationship between Town government and local businesses.
11. Seek to retain and attract retirees as part of our economic development strategy.
12. Encourage recycling by in-town businesses through information, incentives, services and/or awards.
13. Support and expand arts and cultural enterprises as contributors to the Town's economy.
14. Locate new business and institutional development within or immediately adjacent to the existing Town limits.
15. Work with the County to promote rural agricultural economy uses over residential development of currently open land. Examples include: beef and hay production, Christmas tree farms, wineries/orchards, nursery-grown tree farms, and direct-to-buyer fruit and vegetable growers.

#### **ACTION ITEMS – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Establish a committee of interested elected officials, businesses and residents to formulate and implement a community economic development plan with advice and assistance from the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development and Loudoun Convention and Visitors Association.
2. Explore the viability of promoting and packaging Hamilton as a visitor destination for quiet weekend escapes or retreats.
3. Review zoning, development, and annexation requests to ensure a healthy balance of residential and commercial uses in Town.
4. Revise the Town zoning ordinance to promote new commercial structures that will be compatible with the traditional visual character of the existing Town architecture.
5. Develop and maintain adequate funding sources (grants, funds) to implement capital improvements programs.

6. Promote availability of high speed Internet access to accommodate telecommuters and small-scale high-tech service businesses.
7. Actively support existing businesses by developing and distributing posters, brochures, directories, and advertisements that feature and promote our local in-town and JLMA businesses.
8. Consider allocating a portion of the lodging tax receipts towards tourism development.
9. Work to enhance the visual appearance of the entrance corridors to create an attractive small business environment.
10. Plan and develop accommodations/programs for small bus group tours.
11. Continue to support the Hamilton Day Festival and other community events that promote tourism.
12. Research options for acquisition of in-town open space and/or development of streetscape plans particularly for the business core area as an investment in the economic viability of the downtown and the community.
13. Implement design, sign, and landscaping guidelines for commercial areas.